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HENRY WARD BEECHER.



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HENRY WARD BEECHER.

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# THE UNIVERSAL HEART OF GOD.

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“For thy Maker is thine husband; the Lord of Hosts is his name; and thy Redeemer the Holy One of Israel; the God of the whole earth shall he be called.”—ISA. liv. 5.

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You will take notice that in this passage the sense of the divine presence is brought near to men by those symbols which have in themselves the most precious associations, and which touch human experience in its tenderest points. It is a very striking thing for one to call himself *father*; but you will observe that here the relationships are carried out.

“Thy Maker is thine husband; the Lord of Hosts is his name; and thy Redeemer the Holy One of Israel.”

Now, what two elements could have produced a magnificent consciousness of the glory of an overruling God so strongly as this appeal to the tenderest love of the human soul—family love, and to patriotism, or the love of country?

It is as if God had said, “I am to you as the husband is to the wife and to the household; I am to you the Holy One of Israel—your fathers’ God, and your nation’s God.”

Thus having brought to their consciousness all these extremely powerful suggestions and tender relationships—and it is on this ground of the particularity of nationality that it has significance—he adds: “The God of the *whole earth* shall he be called.” Not of any single household or select circle of households, was he the God; not of any single elect nation. Although he may show himself to any single nation as more precious, and clearer than to another, yet, the God



of the whole earth is he. He is to all, or may be, what he is to any. He is to every nation what he is to yours.

The Hebrew idea of God stands in marked contrast to that of other nations. For although national gods were abundant; although we have it in incontestible history, that very largely the divine idea grew among men, branching out of this sense of the family and of national life; yet, in regard to the Hebrews, they seemed to hold, by their best men and their clearest thinkers, that though Almighty God had made a disclosure of himself to the Jewish people transcendently clearer than to anybody else, he was not on that account theirs only. He was all the world's.

A candle does not belong to the candlestick that holds it, but to every one in the room where it shines; and the knowledge of God, the preciousness of the divine revelation, does not belong to the nation in which it is first and most clearly disclosed. They hold it as a torch; but it is that all may have the benefit of its shining.

The Hebrew idea stands still more in contrast with the polytheistic notion of God; for the Jews held that there was but one God, the Father of all, the Lord of all; whereas almost all other nations contiguous to them, and everywhere, although they held to unity, yet held to a unity that was subdivided, and by which heroes and historic personages rose to the stature of gods. The government of creation was thus distributed into an aristocracy of gods; than which nothing could be more repugnant to the revelation of God as it was made to the Jewish people.

It is also very clearly to be distinguished from pantheism of every kind—or the teaching that nature is itself, in its sum total, God. By that term we mean the sum of all thinkers and of all thinking—the sum of all vitality and of all phenomena: not a personality, but a complete system of the universe.

The latest mystic and veiled form of this is that which Mr. Matthew Arnold has set forth in an attempt, wonderful in ingenuity, and still more wonderful in other respects, to show that the Hebrews did not believe in a personal God, but that they believed in “a stream of tendencies which

make for righteousness"—that they believed in this great quality of righteousness, and a tendency of the universe to produce it; that they believed in an abstract force or influence and not in a personal God. I say that this is one of the most wonderful pieces of ingenuity, as a literary marvel, that has been known in our life-time. That a man should undertake to show that the Hebrews, who have personified God in every conceivable way, who have clothed him with every name that belongs to personality, who have represented him in every possible personal form, and whose whole literature stands distinct from every other on the peculiar ground of God's intense personality and companionableness, now and hereafter—that a man should undertake to show that they did not believe in a personal God, is one of the most stupendous and astounding literary marvels, not only of this age but of any age.

We are told in the Scriptures that God is a Spirit; that he may be made known relatively, partially; and that the knowledge which is received of him must follow the development of men themselves. Nowhere else is there so much modesty as in the revelation of God in the Scriptures. In no other treatise, in no other book, is there such a sense of the fact that God is greater and better than anything that man can conceive, and infinitely different from man's conception. We are pointed in the directions in which his greatness appears. We are told that by and by, in a later stage, and in a higher development, we are to have the full knowledge of God—if ever a knowledge of the infinite can be taken in by the finite.

Except by analogies and glimpses of the spirit, he is incommunicable; and the revelation of him must follow, as it has followed, the development of man. There may be a disclosure in words, which seeks to compass the whole ideal of God. There was that, given to Moses; and the more you read and reflect, the more you will be filled with admiration for that disclosure of God which is recorded in the thirty-fourth chapter of Exodus. The reason for it is very sublime. This great nation had been taken out of captivity, where they had been infected, more or less, either by idolatry or

stupidity and animalism, and they were being led forth. It was to know how to lay the foundations of a nation that the statesman, Moses, asked God to reveal himself to him. If there be anything that a statesman may ask, it is this: "In the discharge of my duties to my kind, grant me something of the knowledge of that God whose function it is to discharge universal duties to universal beings." So Moses asked God to show him Himself, and I think that if statesmen in our day, reading the Constitution none the less, were wont to say to God all the more, "Make manifest to us what is entire truth, entire honor, entire fidelity, and entire beneficence," we should have a much higher state of government than we now have.

A national existence was starting, and the people had been gathered together at the foot of Mount Sinai, receiving the commands of God; and then, in the midst of the most extraordinary concomitants, addressed to the senses through the dramatism of nature in her wildest moods, God, in answer to the request of Moses, "Show me thy glory," said, "The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and fourth generation."

There has never yet been put one single word by human thought or pen to the magnificence and the completeness of this delineation of the divine character of him who overrules the world by such natural laws as that conduct entails consequences, and consequences carry with them penalties, and penalties go on from generation to generation. Modern science is just beginning to unfold those facts that were disclosed to Moses in the earlier centuries of Hebrew national life.

Now, in the administration of government, under such a constitution of natural laws, God makes himself known as paternal, as full of mercy, full of kindness, full of graciousness, full of forgiveness—a forgiveness which goes through all the range of transgression and sin.



And yet, though there is this declaration of God in words, we are to bear in mind that any real knowledge of God must always be dynamic, the result of the power of experience. Our knowledge of God must be merely speculative and intellectual, until we have filled up the conceptions handed down to us, and which we have been drilled under, by consecutive and long administration.

My father brought me up and took care of me till I was of ripe age; and my thought of my father is clear and distinct because of the continued perceptible action of his mind and government upon me through all the periods of my life. My mother died when I was only three years of age—an unforgotten name; an influence without personality; a vision, a form, an inspiration, but not a person. My father is to me clear as crystal, because his personality wrought upon me. My mother is to me an ideal beauty, because she did not live to exert a direct personal influence upon me, but left a thought and a memory into which has been gathered every ingenuity of fancy. Every conception of beauty, everything which makes womanhood resplendent—that I have attributed to my unknown mother. To my mind she is a nebulous glory, while he is a distinct, clear-marked personality.

The character of God, as a poet or a mere philosopher would reveal it, remains in the minds of men simply as a speculative brightness. The God who has governed the world by laws that have been found out by joy and sorrow and mistake and obedience—that God is the *known* God; and so it has come to pass that that revelation which has been made in names and words, largely and radiantly, has not had half so much influence as that side of the divine nature which has been called into existence by the revelation and disclosure of God's administrative processes in this world.

Now, any administration of a moral government by laws must respect the character and condition of the subject; and if men were born into life, high, complete, in full garniture, then we might consider government capable of disclosing itself to them in all its amplitude; but if, in point of historic fact, men have come into this world at the lowest stage,

if nation after nation has been born into savagism, if they have gradually unfolded out of their low condition, and if there has been a long process of their education through ages, then it is true that any comprehension of the divine nature must follow the capacity of the race upon which moral government is administered. And if, taking them at their lowest physical state, God would govern men, he would do it with power, with imperiousness, compelling obedience; this would be the side of divine nature and manifestation which their circumstances demanded and required.

We whip children; but we do not whip men. The rod in the family is good, whatever people may still say. As long as men have bodies, there will be motive in the skin which a rod can find out in a thousand instances in which it could not be found out in any other way. O yes, persons who have one child, or two children, in affluence, with so much time that they do not know what to do with it, and who with all their resources can sit and take care of the child, watch for it beforehand, and turn the switch so that at every point the father's and mother's forethought necessarily causes it to run on the right track—it is very well for such persons to be indignant at the brutality of the discipline of other people, and to say, “The way to govern children is to win their love, and imbue them with all knowledge.” That is the best way, when you can resort to it; but take a washerwoman who has nine children, and who goes out to work through the live long day, and comes back at evening to cook the food of her husband and children, and sits up at night to repair their scanty raiment, and works until nature is weary and worn, and let those nine great robust children be quarreling with each other, or with the neighbors' children, right and left, and say to her, “The best way is to win the confidence of these children, and to exercise forethought in their behalf”! I tell you, she must use the instrument which she can use, and must use it promptly—the instrument which God has given; and that instrument, and the circumstances for the use of it, are apparent to everybody in this audience who was brought up in New England!

And that which is true in the lower sphere of our own



existence is true elsewhere. You must govern according to the thing which is to be governed. If you are governing animals you must address yourselves to that which will be recipient in them. If you are governing savages you must put an amount of fear and force into your government which will make itself appreciated by the savage. Always working away from the lower motive, we are to use that which shall prepare the subject for the next higher plane, and the next higher, and the next higher. It has been true in the history of the world that, in the unfoldings of the divine economy, and in the interpretation of the divine character, the earlier periods have been obliged to represent God as more imperious, as more full of physical punishment; and figures abound which indicate this. As represented in the Bible, God is lion, eagle, thunder, lightning, monarch, and even despot, saying, "I will do what I will do, and obey thou shalt." But as the world unfolded more and more, and became more and more competent, there were larger proportions given, and motives were set forth which disclosed the higher nature of God; and these were addressed to national life, to pride of nation, to the life and affections of the family; and these left the old motives effaced. For God, in the higher revelations of his character, is paternal and national.

And out of these higher views and motives, in the fullness of times, it begins to appear that God is paternal, not to one nation, not to one household, not to the lineage of Abraham alone, but to the whole world—that he is God of the entire earth, and that he governs all mankind, not for the sake of his own selfishness; not for the oriental idea of his own personal resplendency; not as Solomon governed, who sucked the nation dry that his individual glory might be augmented, leaving its foundations rotten, so that the moment he disappeared it toppled down; not for the sake of making himself look beautiful as the Governor of nations: he is revealed to us in the last day, through Jesus Christ, as the Universal Sufferer. When the times had come in which the world could hear it, then came the last disclosure of the divine nature, which is that, having been the Creator and Preserver, he was also, from eternity to eternity, the One who thought,

cared, suffered for every living thing upon the globe, that it might be saved by his parentage.

Rising thus from the lower forms of appeal and motive, rising from the earth, rising from the simple phenomena of nature, rising from the ruder forms of primitive government, and from all the developments of the household, just as fast as men's moral ideas enlarge themselves, the conception grows larger and more bountiful and merciful. Not that it leaves out the fact that sin entails suffering. The truth remains that God, by the very constitution of his nature, of the globe and of the universe, will forever join disobedience to law, and to consequent suffering. That abides. It is the mainspring for the upbuilding of a race or people. But while that remains, there are other glories that remain—namely, the power of conscience; the power of faith; the power of suffering love, which is the definition of Jesus Christ, the Revelator of God's suffering for the universe: suffering, not as one endures an ignominious penalty, not as one undergoes punishment for wickedness, but as a hero suffers for his country, who, when he dies, is praised by the whole world; or as the mother suffers, who takes care of her children, and dies for them, and, dying, becomes illustrious; or as men suffer who sacrifice their interests, and lay down their lives, for their fellow-men.

By these experiences, and by these symbols, at last it comes forth that God, standing central in the earth, is doing that which among men is noblest—namely, carrying, suffering, enduring; the great Burden-bearer and Atoner of the universe.

This disclosure of God has been gradual. It is not fully out. It is like the rose, whose sepals are glued together, so that sometimes the beautiful petals cannot break them open, until some kind hand pulls them asunder, when, in an instant, the blossom bursts forth. The unfolding of the knowledge of God has been waiting through long periods. It has not yet fully blossomed out. And this truth of the universality of God, of the fraternity of God, of the relation of God to men as the God of the whole earth, is one of those truths that have lingered long.

He is not the God of the whole earth as the Jews held that he was, who thought that Jerusalem was his fishing place, and that he was to sit in the temple, and throw out his line, and draw in all nations, and make them all Jews, just as to-day the Churchmen think that God is a Churchman, and that he is going to sit on the dome of the cathedral, and throw out his gospel line, and bring all people in and make them Churchmen.

How good a thing it is that, amid the criminations of theology, now and then there is a laughing-spot!—for I think that wit and humor are the natural antagonists of the malign feelings and belluine passions. The devil never laughs.

See how people are going to bring in the unity of all nations. “Now let us compromise, and let us have unity,” say the different churches, and they all respond, “O, yes, let us have unity.” Says the Presbyterian Church, “There must be government, and there must be something definite to be believed. Now, our system contains the greatest simplicity and the utmost liberty of worship, and exactly the statement of truth as it is revealed in the Bible; and you cannot expect us to give up that which is as clear as daylight. To have unity only requires that men should all agree to that which we teach”—which I suppose is true.

The Episcopal Church says, “Why, unity?—it is the great desire of the heart of God, the world is waiting for it, and why should it not be? The world have nothing to do but to accept our form of worship and government, if they would all be united in one.”

The Methodist Episcopal Church agree to this, except that they hold that there should be more enthusiasm. Episcopacy runs to taste, and Methodism to social fervor. They are the same, either in America or in England, with this difference.

Meanwhile, the very modest Congregational Church steps in, and says, “It is unreasonable to expect that the Presbyterian will give up his system, that the Episcopalian will give up his system, or that the Methodist will give up that which is peculiar to him. If you bring them together and expect



them to give up their separate notions, and go contrary to their education, you cannot do anything in the direction of unity; but if you bring together all sorts of people, and let them vote exactly what they will do, and allow them to determine among themselves what shall be their government, you will accomplish something"—(and that's Congregationalism!)

So every one of the denominations stands substantially on its own platform, and says to everybody else, "My dear friend, let us be united; let me swallow you, and then we will be one!"

So it was that the old Jews interpreted language like my text. It was revealed to them that God was the God of the whole earth; and they interpreted it to mean that he would be the God of all men when they were Jews. According to their interpretation, the Assyrian was to turn Jew; the Egyptian was to turn Jew; the Roman was to turn Jew; every one of them was to kiss the foundations of the temple in Jerusalem. Said they, "It is the promise of God that he will be the God of his people; we are his people; we are to subdue all men; and they are to be his people through us."

I need not say to you that, when you see this spirit delineated in one class, you at once see how widespread it is among all classes.

Now, if God is the God of the whole earth, he must be the God of the whole earth just as it is; and I remark that while believers in the true God were tribal and national, the natural mistake which was made, and which should put us on our guard lest we fall into it again in substance, was that of supposing that God was in a special manner the God of a particular class. So let us not forget that if he is the God of the whole earth he is the God of all those physical conditions under which men are born. He is the God of those laws of descent which make the character of the parent go down to the children through many generations. He is the God of those decrees by which the drunkard's children inherit the drunkard's proclivities; by which deceit propagates deceit; by which honor breeds honor; by which motives brought to bear upon parents have an effect on the welfare of their children, reaching down to the depths of futurity. He is the God of

the climate in which every person lives—of that climate which drives the Esquimau under ground during most of the months of the year, and that climate which brings the swarthy African all the year into the open air, without clothes and without a dwelling. If he is the God of all the earth, then he is the God that establishes those laws which determine the occupations of men, and their characters, in a large degree. He is the God of the physical globe, in this sense: that whatever affects men by its nature, by its unconscious and continuous influence upon them, is of his ordination. Being the God of the whole earth, he is the God of the mountains and of the valleys; of the winter and of the summer; of industry and of commerce; of all the arrangements of life by which men are influenced. Men's places of abode, and their nature, are largely determined by their circumstances; and these circumstances are God's decrees.

What are God's decrees? Every natural fact is a decree of God. God's decrees are not limited simply to the invisible world, nor to doctrines, nor to administrations, as theology has pointed it out. God's decrees are seen in the eternal summer of the tropics, and in the eternal winter of the far north. God's decrees are seen in the hard work of the industrious man on the mountain side, and in the shiftless work of the indolent man in the valleys overflowing with fatness. God's decrees are seen in all the influences that make races and nations. God's decrees are seen in all the inevitable effects that follow the causes that are operating in the world. These causes are divine; or, if you say they are not, then to you God is not the God of the whole world.

Our conception of God in theology must not forget those facts; and it is for the finding out of those facts to-day that science is at work. It is because, in finding out those facts, men of science run against the old theologies, that they are called infidels; but every disclosure that is made by science, revealing any fact of creation, is a revelation of God, and is precious, and ought to be recognized as important by every man. There is much more that belongs to God's universe than we have yet found out; and there are many things belonging to God's universe that are different from the con-

ceptions which we have formed of them in our imperfect thought.

God is also a providence. As a providence he is not shut up in Jerusalem, nor in Palestine, nor in any sweet little parish that nestles along the Connecticut River Valley in Connecticut or in Massachusetts. He is a providence in the whole earth; and he is the same kind of providence to the white and the black, the rich and the poor, the bond and the free, the male and the female.

The whole earth is God's; in its physical structure, and in the social, intellectual, moral and spiritual relations of its inhabitants; and his special providence is spread abroad over every part of the globe. It belongs to Africa, to Asia, to Europe, to America and to the islands of the sea. But how is it that we think of this? As the old Jew thought of it? God remembers us and takes care of us; but does he not remember and take care of the nations that are outside of us? How is it with the people throughout the world? Out of three hundred million people on the globe, scarcely one million are in those conditions which are prescribed by theology. Out of these three hundred million people there are probably not a million of the elect, if you try them by the judicature of the confession of faith. O my soul! straight and narrow is the road. Many strive to find it, and few get in, and fewer get out; and if the kingdom of God was entered by the gate of the Westminster confession of faith, if that were the gate through which every man had to go into heaven or not at all, in my judgment there would not be enough to go into heaven in any one generation to raise a chorus. There would be solo singers scattered up and down through an immense space here and there, and only a few of them—so cabined, so cribbed, so narrow has become the sense of the divine nature that shines over the globe—aye, to which the globe itself is but a sun-spot; the universe swelling out illimitably and rolling on past research and past thought, portions of it, doubtless, significant by their creations, differing from man. Everywhere the universal and Almighty God extends his providence; and he is God of the whole earth by the creation of the physical, and by the providence which watches



over men as tenderly and as gently as a mother watches over the rocking cradle. There is a thought of God which is sweet to the swarthy Indian in the infancy of his development, to the wandering Calmuck, and to the most benighted of the interior African tribes. There is a thought of God that is dear among the Asiatics, the Chinese, the Japanese, and the Tartars. God's heart is not divided by latitudes or longitudes ; it is not checked by national names nor by race. It is universal. It is the reason of love, the course of it, the power of it, the father of it, in everything ; and God is himself the most blessed exemplar of it. And the God of the whole earth shall he be called—not yet, but by and by. The day is coming.

If he be the God of the whole earth, then all those seminal and fundamental ideas which are common to the race of mankind spring from him, and all other tendencies spring from him ; and they are concurrent testimonies, prophecies, of the administration of this world. He is the God of the household, and of all those influences which spring from its love, its responsibilities and its cares. He is a God that so made men that society is necessary and indispensable.

When a vine is made it needs no argument that it wants something to climb on. That it is a vine, is the argument that it must needs climb ; and the convolvulus climbs upon the stake, twining itself about it ; the ivy throws out at every axil leaves that clasp and hold ; and the clematis quirls its leaf-stalk about the wire or the pole, and so climbs ; but the very structure of the vine says, "Climb !" The methods of climbing are different, but the necessity of it is in the organization of the vine.

Now, God is the Father of kings, magistrates, governors ; and he made men so that when they came to be developed, they must have some form of government and society ; and so civil governments spring from an original decree in the nature of men.

Out of that grows the tendency which leads to man's development, which overcomes the animal in man and develops the social quality, and out of that the moral influence, and out of that the civil status, and out of that spiritual attri-

butes. All these instruments are at work ; and the fruits which they bring forth are the results of divine decrees—the decrees of that God who is God over all, blessed forever.

In every part of the globe these tendencies are the same. The family live everywhere modified by divine inspirations and customs, under substantially the same government. Everywhere magistrates differ, laws differ ; and yet it is substantially a government in which the obedience and subordination of citizens is universal ; and all the divine nature, with its power and influence, is used for the purpose of civilization ; and there is no civilization that does not enfranchise the moral nature—that is, tend toward religion in its true forms. And that whole administration by which men go through various institutions to come to a state of civilization is of God ; and it is as broad and clear in the woods as in Jerusalem, or on the interior plains of Asia as on the lip of the Mediterranean Sea ; and everywhere God has shown that he is the God of all the earth ; not of a select people—yes, of a select people, doubtless ; but not to the exclusion of others. He is the God of the whole earth in this : that he has revealed through Jesus Christ the paternity of God ; and when he teaches men to say, “ Our Father,” the last stage is reached. Beyond that there is no name. There are no intimations that can be grander, more powerful, more genial, or more comforting than that.

In view of these statements, I remark, first, There is in church life a bringing home of God’s relations to men ; but we must not make the mistake in the church that the Jews did, who supposed because God had specially ordained them to be an instrument in his hands for the civilization of the globe, that therefore he was exclusively their God.

I can understand how a man who keeps a lighthouse may come to think, at last, that the light in his lighthouse is the only light that there is at night upon the globe, and that he is the most favored keeper of that light ; I can imagine that kind of conceit ; and in the Jewish Church, as we see by reading its history, the Jews felt that they owned God, that he was a monopoly. And we find that same spirit, after generations have passed by, existing in the Christian Church,

where it has been held that God was the God of every man that came in and accepted doctrines and ordinances as the priests taught them.

It is difficult to make discriminations without causing misapprehension. You and I believe that common schools are useful and necessary; but suppose in any neighborhood where there is no school, the boys are determined to have an education? It does not alter the fact that it is easier to get an education with a school than without one; but if a man can get an education without a school he has a right to do it; and if he does get an education without going to school, it is as good, so far as it goes, as though he had gone to school.

The church stands as God's school-house, and it is an easier and shorter and more natural way of acquiring moral and spiritual knowledge to gather together with Christians where there is instruction, and where there are facilities for learning religious truth; but when men say, "If you do not gather here you have no right to these things anywhere;" I say that the God of intelligence belongs to the race, and that a man has a right to get knowledge anywhere, by a school, or without a school, by a teacher, or without a teacher. Education is as free as sunlight, and a man may take it where he can get it. If you can get it through appointed schools they will help you; but if you cannot get it so it is free to you to get it as you will.

Now, churches that arrogate the ownership of God, and of all the truth of God that has been given to the world; churches that arrogate the ownership of all those ducts through which truth extends, and say, "Yes, God is the God of the whole earth, if the earth will join us,"—such churches belie their office and their Maker.

There is not a church on earth in which a man may not come to God and find salvation by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ; and there is not a place on earth outside of churches in which you may not be saved. Even by the side of an idol a man may find God to be a substantial reality. Is that a favorable place for it? No. Is it likely that he will? No. Are the moral influences such as would in all probability tend to it? No. Nevertheless, if a man stands by the side



of an idol, and has the spirit of God, of the Lord Jesus Christ, he may call him what he pleases—Jupiter, or Jehovah, or anything else. God does not live in a name, but in a quality; and if a man anywhere, in the darkness of heathenism or in the light of civilization, is led to put his trust, his faith, in qualities that constitute the true God, then those qualities are the true God to him, without regard to names.

Well, then, we are not to give up the church; for it is important in the educating work; it is necessary that it should stand as an example, as a light, as a teacher; yet the attempt of the church to administer God's whole trust of human nature is a piece of arrogance and impertinence which ought to be rebuked in our day, as it has been by the divine providence in days that are gone by.

No theory of atonement, I remark secondly, can be valid, that has not been, to the whole world, in all their conditions, fixed by the providence of God. It was not the Calmuck's fault that he was born in a den; it was not the Bedouin's fault that he was born in the desert; it was not the North American Indian's fault that he was born in a wigwam; and it was not any nation's fault that it was born under cramped customs and laws and institutions; and if God so loved the world that he gave his Son to die for it, if he is disclosed in the Lord Jesus Christ, the way of salvation is open to all men, everywhere, and there is atoning mercy, and a providential supervising of it, reaching out to all nations, races and conditions. How shall it come? I do not know. In what way shall it work? I do not know. I cannot unravel the inward counsels of God; but I know that they who seek God and his righteousness shall be accepted and saved. I believe that for every class on the created earth there is power in *that atonement which is God himself*. Of that atonement which is God himself, Christ was the translator; he brought it out, and made it apparent; but the power to forgive sins lies in the irresistible love of God himself. The power to transform men lies in the inherent nature of God. No act is so powerful as the actor; no event is so powerful as the influence that caused it; and in the atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ there is a power which

though you may not be able to follow it, or interpret it, or conform it to the canons of received philosophy, is universal, reaches out to every human creature; and he who limits it, or withdraws it, is, I think, like a man who steals medicine from a hospital, bread from a famished city, or water from those who are perishing of thirst.

No theodicy can satisfy the thinking mind of to-day but that one which makes God's government a government over the whole world, and not an oriental household. In the old times there was the wife and her children, and there were the concubines and their children. There were Sarah and Hagar—one for the wilderness and what she could get, and the other for the homestead and its prerogatives. There may be reasons why, in a kind of parabolic life, there should be such historic reminiscences; but to take these rude experiences of an early age, and lift them into the heavenly sphere, and call them God and moral government, and say that God is the God of the favored few, and that the great outlying sensitive race are not under his government and sympathy and law, seems to me to be so atrocious that the more men become educated and thoughtful, the more they will resent it.

The fact is this: that in our time the world needs a view of God which shall satisfy the highest reason. God made the reason, and it is that by which we go back to him. Without reason there is no duty, no interpretation of providence, no knowledge of God, and no civilization. They who decry reason as simply a natural faculty, and therefore not to be trusted, rail against God himself.

A view of God which shall meet the wants of the world must be a view which shall satisfy our understanding of the undeniable facts of life. It must be a view which shall reach the real moral sense of the globe, now educated in the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. It must be a view which shall meet that state of mind to which men have been brought by the divine providence; by the educating influences of the life and teachings of the Saviour. For we are passing out from the age of enforcements, and are coming more and more into a democratic age, not in the lower sense of the term, but in its highest and best sense. We are coming to an age of indi-

vidual power, individual judgment and individual rights. We are coming to that age in which men are grown to such an extent that they are beginning more and more to be large as individuals; and they are thinking and acting from motives within themselves, and not merely from exterior and enforcing influences.

Our time, then, needs that which shall satisfy the wants of the great mass of growing and thinking men. For ages men have made gods after their own hearts; they have made gods of their passions; they have made gods of lust; but we are living in an era in which the ideal life is government, and law, and intelligence, and purity, and loving-kindness; and I say that the public sentiment which has been brought under the influence of the Gospel of Jesus Christ cannot but be shocked by the presentation of a God so narrow, so partial, so exclusive, so hard, so cruel, as the God which theology has presented. You may build as many arguments as you please; but, though they be made of iron and steel, clinched and double clinched, you will not long keep before a thinking and acting generation of men the idea of a God that is repugnant and hideous to the sentiments of the human soul. Men that are divinely enlightened will not tolerate the thought of a God that shocks the reason and the conscience, and still maintain his power and ascendancy in the heaven. But, on the other hand, present a God that will not rub out the difference between right and wrong; present a God that makes more and more manifest through the ages that righteousness exalts a nation; present a God that administers over the earth an equable government, pitying and sparing his subjects; make him the Chief among ten thousand and altogether lovely; search the choicest places of human experience; go where the heart in its noblest moods is responsive to the advanced thoughts and examples of the age; go where love suffers and smiles to suffer, and take some letters there; go where friendship is sublimest and most unselfish, and take some letters there; go where heroism is strongest, bravest and noblest, and take some letters there; go where sin is alleviated, where sorrow is illumined, where mercy blesses those who deserve no mercy, and take some letters there; go to

prisons, and hospitals, and battle-fields, and poor-houses, and chambers of sickness, and take some letters there ; go to all places where men are yet animals, and not angels, and gather letters, and they will be letters which, when put together, will spell *GOD*, glorious in the heaven and on earth. And that is a name which is composite not of barbaric forces, but of sweetness, and long-suffering through the ages, and patience illimitable. Make me that God, and I ask no argument. He that has beauty needs no eulogy. He that has power needs nothing but that. A God that reaches the want of the race and the deepest feelings of the soul will stand, though against him are hurled all the storms of infidelity. No bombarding of eloquence or dissuasion of philosophy can keep men from believing in a God who is their health, their life, their joy and their salvation.

That is what the world is waiting for ; and if to the great work of ushering it in science can come bringing its offerings, let it come ; or if nations can come unfolding their experience, and so do something to help on this end, let them come ; if the household, more rich than all other things in its treasures of experience, can come with a sacred love which shall illustrate and glorify the name of this yet unknown God, let it come ; if the soul of him that God has inspired in his personal history, and in whom he has unfolded strange and rare conceptions, can come with his contribution of knowledge, let him come ; and if all these things can be lifted up and made into an image of God before the world, God will be glorified, man will be redeemed, the race will be saved, and the universe will rejoice forever and forever.



## PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON.\*

MAY God be merciful to these dear children. Thou hast brought them into this great world, where they know not anything. Born into life as to the outward, they are full of darkness as to things inward. Though they be born into the visible, yet all that is real lies within the invisible. Coming forth from darkness into life, they are still more in the darkness than in the light. And we commend them, little strangers and pilgrims, to thy heavenly love and care, believing that thou wilt by thy providence vouchsafe to them all needed guidance. If not a sparrow falls without thy notice, our Father, shall they? Bless them in the love of their parents; and may it be a love that shall bring forth wisdom. Grant that while they are receiving benefaction from their strength, and experience, and wisdom, these little children may render back a hundred-fold in joy and love, and in the teaching which comes from them to their parents for the service which they receive.

And we beseech of thee that thou wilt open the hearts of thy people more and more to these little ones; for of such is the kingdom of God. May we in them behold what we should be toward thee. May we behold their clinging love, their conscious helplessness, and their implicit trust. May we recognize in thee a Father; and may we have toward thee that trust and that love which a child has toward its parents; and may we have a consciousness that we derive from thee whatever is best and noblest in the upbuilding of that nature which is to outlive death, and which is to stand in glory in the life which is to come.

Remember all the children that are within our congregation, and that are under our care in the various labors of thy servants, in every field, everywhere. We pray that the endeavor to inspire in their parents and in the households where they dwell more fidelity may be blessed of God. May the efforts which we make to instruct and ground them in a sound morality, and to bring them up as useful men and citizens, may receive thy blessing.

We pray that those who are willing to labor and to bear pain may rejoice to feel that they follow, though it be with feeble, incompetent footsteps, the example of their Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. May none be weary in well doing, remembering that in due season they shall reap if they faint not.

Bless all those who, looking upon their children, are in distress by reason of any fear, any grief, or any trouble that darkens their life or their household, May their faith never fail them. May they feel that they never stand so near to the heart and right hand of divine power as when they are pleading for the welfare of their children; and may they not be impatient because God is long-suffering and waits. In due season thou shalt avenge thine own elect; in due season thou shalt bring forth righteousness; and let none that are turmoiled, let none that are distressed of soul, let none that bear burdens complain or murmur. May they wait upon the Lord. And

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\*Immediately following the baptism of children.

wilt thou bring forth light in every household where there is darkness, and wilt thou bring forth joy in every household where there is sorrow.

Grant thy blessing to rest upon all teachers in public schools and in private schools; upon all who are teaching the poor or neglected, whether they be near or afar off; and upon all who are seeking to lay foundations of piety in true knowledge. Bless all those who are laboring to prepare teachers for their sphere; and may they rejoice in their work, even under discouragements.

May knowledge go forth, not to overturn faith, but to establish it on immutable foundations. May this nation be saved from superstition, from blind adhesion to exterior things, and from vanity arising from a conceited ambition in things intellectual. May this great people fear God, and keep his commandments. So we pray that thy name may be honored and glorified in our prosperity.

Bless, we pray thee, the President of these United States, and all who are joined with him in authority. Bless all judges, and magistrates, and legislators. Grant that the whole body of the citizens of this land may obey the laws implicitly, and that justice may prevail, and that peace may abide throughout all our borders.

We beseech of thee that thou wilt hold back thine hand. Suffer not the scourge of disease to fall upon this land. Let not thy plagues visit this people. By thy mercies soften their hearts and lead them to repentance.

We pray for all the striving nations of the earth. We believe that out of darkness is coming light. Ere long the morning shall break; and there is not that in night that can put out the light that, traveling afar, shall come again.

Though revolution follow revolution, though there be wars upon wars, and though troubles multiply, we rejoice, O Lord our God, that thy word stands sure. Thou art the God of the whole earth. All things are beneath thine eye, and all things in the end shall come to work together for good for the welfare of man, and for the glory of God.

We beseech of thee that thou wilt, in thine own time, hasten these things. Bring in Jew and Gentile. Exalt all nations. Make the weak strong, and keep the strong from impetuous pride and domination. So make all men recognize the brotherhood of love as that which should bind them together. Bring in the bright ideal of life in society and among nations. Make haste, we beseech of thee, thou that art emerging toward the future with abundant victories, to show forth the signs and tokens that shall give hope to all men. Come, for the whole earth doth wait for thee.

And so, at last, when thou shalt have redeemed the nations and established thy kingdom in all the earth, let the heavens and the earth rejoice together, and all the sons of God unite in gladness and thanksgiving to thee, as when the world was first created.

And to thy name shall be the praise, Father, Son, and Spirit, evermore. *Amen.*

## PRAYER AFTER THE SERMON.

O THOU that art love over all the earth, thou that art power over all the earth, thou that art knowledge to all the earth, thou that art redemption to all the earth, thou that hast in days gone by, from eternity, been God, and thou that shalt be unto eternity God over all, to thee we bring our rejoicings, knowing that we do not understand thee; knowing that it is but the hem of thy garment that we touch with our thoughts, but believing that we shall behold thy blessed and beatific countenance and understand thee when our souls, by heavenly intelligence, shall be uplifted in the life that is to come. Grant, we pray thee, that all the glimpses and fragmentary knowledge which we have of thee may be so directed by thy good providence that we shall go on, to virtue, to fortitude, to aspiration, to the utmost endeavor, and to patient continuance in well doing on every side. By faith, by love, and by hope may we hold fast to thee, and wait for thy disclosure, which shall be made when we shall see thee as thou art, and be like unto thee. Now we see through a glass, darkly; but then we shall see face to face. Now all things are transient, and are passing away; but amidst universal wreck behold, blossoming in the wilderness, unsmitten by the winter, and unscorched by the summer, that youth which time cannot touch. There abideth faith, hope, love; and the greatest of these is love; and thou, O God, art love. And to thy name shall be praise for ever and ever. *Amen.*

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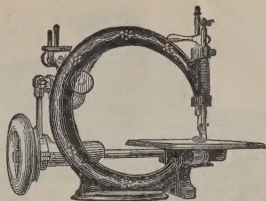
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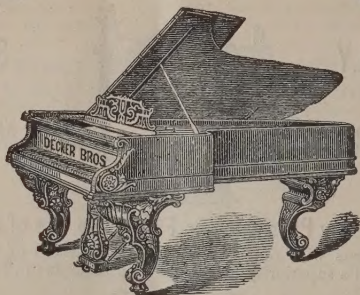
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